Kiss it Better

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/27437359.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Hannibal (TV)
Relationship:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter
Characters:	Will Graham, Hannibal Lecter
Additional Tags:	Friends to Lovers, Season 1, Romance, Smut, Yearning, Tenderness, Emotional Hurt/Comfort, Will Finds Out, Dark Will, lovesick Hannibal, First Time, Post-Episode: s01e08 Fromage, Tooth-Rotting Fluff, Will calling Hannibal "Sir", Light Dom/sub, Biting
Language:	English
Series:	Part 7 of What If
Collections:	Unorthodox Therapy (Hannigram)
Stats:	Published: 2020-11-07 Words: 10,331 Chapters: 1/1

Kiss it Better

by EarthsickWithoutYou

Summary

Set during Season one, post-"Fromage". Sensing Will's ongoing anxiety and difficulty in relaxing, Hannibal suggests that a kiss from the right person might help him to find some relief and comfort. Or, what if one kiss could suddenly make everything so simple?

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

“May I be candid?” Hannibal inquired politely, hands neatly folded over his crossed legs.

Will laughed, rocking slightly in his leather chair across from this therapist who had the uncanny knack of making him do that more and more often lately: smile, blush, exhibit bright eyes and tenderly rough emotion -- *laugh*. He didn’t usually have much of a tendency to chuckle, chortle, or otherwise express amusement, much less happiness. But somehow the two of them seemed to get each other’s dark humor and sardonic views on life in a way that tickled his previously inactive funny bone. More than that, the open-hearted sounds of his amusement were tangled up in a sweet nervousness that perplexed and excited him equally.

Now, Will’s eyes twinkled as his lips curved in mischief. “When are you ever *not*, Dr. Lecter?”

He hadn’t meant to say it like that, a little bit flirtatious, perhaps. But maybe because of the way Dr. Lecter’s eyes resembled amber stained glass or smoky, rich whiskey, or the way his cheekbones appeared to have been hand-sculpted by gods, Will had slipped into the Southern accent of his boyhood days. And the musical, teasing tone he used had caressed every syllable of the man’s name.

And now Lecter was staring at Will, briefly licking his lips.

Fuck.

“If I may be so bold,” Lecter said with a small smirk, endearing in its subtlety, “I believe you almost never relax. And that this is a large factor in your ongoing anxiety.”

Will huffed another laugh, rubbed his knees, then slumped in his chair, but absolutely did *not* relax. His body still felt stiff, sore with stress and overthinking, despite the posture change which only reflected his ongoing general dejection in life.

“You noticed,” he answered, baffled by the way his heart seemed to have snagged on the strange hope the conversation was heading in another, more sensuous direction.

It was a silly crush, and Will would gladly discard it if he could, if it wasn’t stuck to his mind like superglue, if he could stop *noticing* that Dr. Lecter was handsome, bigger than him and older than him in a sexy way (very sexy), imposing with his sophistication and severity, but inclined to melt into a much gentler, more suggestive mode around Will. Or maybe it just *seemed* that way.

He wasn’t about to make another mistake thinking someone wanted him when all they really wanted was to study his mind or check that he wasn’t losing it. Will was tired and embarrassed that he kept mistaking a general social benevolence for romantic overtures. Being alone was definitely easier and better than signing up for one more painful rejection.

The Alana thing had been embarrassing enough, and even the Alana thing wasn’t about Alana. It was a clutch for balance with someone who seemed stable and nice; Dr. Lecter gave Will this funny little sensation, like a long fingernail tracing the back of his skull or the clip-

clop of an eerie stag's hoof on a rain-wet road in the dead of night. The echo of something frightening behind him, breathing on his skin, raising goosebumps, making him want to give into himself. Tantalizing, tempting, dizzying, mysterious, and in no way *safe.*

Lecter didn't offer Will increased stability; his clever words danced over Will's thoughts with the suggestion that he would feel better if he surrendered entirely to his darkest whims. Sometimes, Will thought he might be imagining that darkness in his therapist, or else wanting it because he wanted Lecter, and he associated desire with identification. In any case, he might be imagining the entire attraction, but he knew Alana found him attractive; she'd been relatively obvious about that, and amidst his terrifying descent into chaos, invisible animals in the wall, he needed *touch*. He needed not to be alone.

So he hadn't gone to Lecter for balance, not with all these weird contradictions floating about his perception of the psychiatrist. He'd collapsed into Alana because she was there, testing the situation out of her own curiosity, then finding she didn't have the stomach to deal with Will's instability on a personal level. As their lips touched, though, he'd thought about his Dr. Lecter, in that specific way, *My Dr. Lecter,* missing him, craving a different kiss. Alana's words reminded him of what he shouldn't let himself so easily forget: he was an undesirable, unlovable freak of nature, more a potential experiment than a potential lover. He was a specimen in a lab, and he couldn't be entirely sure the correct place for him wasn't eventually going to be the Evil Minds Museum. The name sounded so insulting to him because it was simplistic in its cruel accuracy.

"You hold yourself with stiff discomfort at all times; your bones are rigid, your breathing tight," Dr. Lecter observed, his tone breezy, which tended to make it easier for Will to hear difficult truths. He liked that Lecter never made some big deal about his problems, but instead treated them with nonchalance. "Sometimes I've noticed you grinding your teeth."

"I don't notice until later, when my jaw's tired," Will said with a more sarcastic chuckle.

"I do believe if you could find some way of relaxing with yourself, your troubles at work and in your own mind would be easier to manage." The therapist looked around the room, at anything but Will, and if his patient didn't know better, he might have thought Lecter felt momentarily overwhelmed by directly addressing this element of Will's issues.

Will sat up a little straighter again, carefully noticing different aspects of Lecter's appearance: the midnight blue suit with its subtle plaid pattern, paired to unlikely perfection with a maroon and gold paisley tie and a crisp white shirt with thin blue stripes. Lecter's hair had fallen slightly loose from its slicked-back styling, sliding down over his brow, making Will's fingers itch as they so often did to caress the errant lock back, then stroke Lecter's ear, jaw and neck before lowering his lips -- no, lowering himself into the doctor's lap -- no, *both* --

Stop, stop, stop. Will resisted the urge to wipe his sweaty palms on the chair; that would be rude. But God, why wouldn't these thoughts of attraction go away? He wasn't even aware he liked guys before meeting Lecter, and now it was all he could seem to understand, his body's insistent response to the remarkable, complicated aura before him. Lecter's presence could swallow him whole, and he'd go very happily. It was too bad he wasn't about to sign up for

yet another humiliating rejection, so the thoughts had to be stifled. *Ugh, right now I could really use a--*

“How about a glass of wine, Will?” Lecter inquired, tilting his head slightly, taking in Will’s quietly smothered panic. “Not that I am advocating for alcohol as a means of relaxation…”

“Yes, please,” Will said too eagerly, “thank you.”

Soon a glass of deliciously full-bodied red wine passed from Lecter’s hand to Will’s, and when their fingers brushed, Will’s heart staggered. He almost dropped the glass, almost watched the blood-like burst of cherry-red liquid exploding in glass on the pristine rug, almost grabbed Lecter’s glass and shattered it too before grabbing him and kissing the living daylights --

Will took a long sip and tried not to choke. “This is very nice. Thanks again.”

Instead of returning to his chair, Hannibal sat atop his desk, placing his wine glass behind him after taking a small sip. He seemed very human right now, the armor of his usual restraint cracked by Will’s conflicted demeanor.

“Will, I just want you to feel better. If I have to use unconventional means to achieve the goal, I must admit I’m mightily tempted to do it.”

Keep your mind out of the gutter, Graham, Will ordered himself. “Uhhmm, unconventional...how do you mean?”

“We know some of the things that help you relax and feel safe,” Lecter elaborated. “Being with your pack of adopted strays.” He smiled because Will did at that. “Fishing, tinkering with boat motors--”

“Saving lives,” Will put in, taking another sip of velvety wine. He still wasn’t relaxing, yet there was something about this magnificently artistic office and the man who presided over it. The experience gave him that hint of forbidden pleasure he couldn’t quite indulge, though he deeply appreciated it.

“Saving lives doesn’t help you relax or feel safe, Will.” Lecter looked at him more sternly. “It is the source of many of your demons. To save lives, you must go deep into the places within yourself that cause you tormented fear, mainly because you refuse to accept them.”

“So I’d be more relaxed if I was okay with the side of myself that admires violence,” Will posited wryly. “If I let myself go a little insane.”

“We are all a little insane on our best days.” Lecter smiled wider, showing off pearly fangs, and Will cleared his throat, setting his glass down on the small table beside him with a faint clatter.

God, to feel those lovely teeth against his throat, grazing down his body, sinking into his sensitive spots, marking him up...had he already cleared his throat? Will tugged at his collar, uncomfortably hot. Maybe another sip of wine.

“My hobbies and the company of the dogs are sort of like blankets thrown over my…’tormented fear,’” Will admitted. “They don’t do enough to help me calm down. I’m always right on the edge of frantic. Is there anything else you recommend I do about that?”

He was babbling, but couldn’t help longing to know how Lecter might reply. The man was like the most suspenseful mystery play, and the twists were as fascinating and delectable as they were impossible to see coming.

“Meds?” Will tacked on with a pained tightening of his jaw.

“I don’t see a need for that, Will. Perhaps a regular massage…”

Will frowned. “I always feel weird about the idea of someone putting their hands all over me like that, just for my gratification. Just for me to relax. It seems so selfish and weird, I don’t know…”

“Or yoga, accompanied by mindfulness practice,” Lecter continued, as if he already anticipated Will would have some excuse ready for rejecting these ideas, too.

“I’d just trip over my own feet, I’m not at all coordinated. Whenever I try mindfulness, there are so many associations all flying at me at once, I almost want to faint, which is *not exactly* the goal.”

“Nevertheless, it’s important that you pinpoint some method that may finally bring you relief. Relaxing might help you to access self-confidence, and that would greatly ease your self-resentment and paranoia.”

“Not a problem you ever have, right? Lack of self-confidence.” Will’s eyes locked onto Hannibal’s, making him realize he had used the man’s first name rather than last in his thoughts.

Hannibal. My Hannibal. He could almost imagine being his boyfriend, his lover, hanging on his arm taking a walk down some imaginary, overly idealized beach in his mind, doing *couple* things together as if there was in this man’s heart a place for him finally to belong. These concepts should perhaps clash with the almost violent cacophony of the sexual desire ripping Will to pieces as he continually repressed it all, but somehow it all felt like one feeling, one need.

“Don’t be so sure,” Lecter answered with this strange, quiet laugh, definitely self-conscious. “Nobody’s perfect. But we’re not talking about me. As to what else I can recommend, aside from talk therapy in which you are currently engaged with a fine therapist…”

Will couldn’t help it; Lecter’s ego was so adorable that he smiled again in response and got another glimpse of those shining, sharp teeth, plus more warmth in that honey-drenched gaze.

“...If you cannot find peace in any of these rituals, I can think of a few others.” Lecter sipped his wine again, almost as if to bolster his usually impeccable confidence before he went on, “Perhaps more regular indulgence in masturbation…”

“Oh,” Will blushed, and his heart felt hot and giddy; his cock seemed to have a lot of ideas about the gravel which had just scattered itself over the silk in Lecter’s tone, and he wasn’t sure he could hide it for much longer. “Um, I do sometimes, but I feel so self-conscious about it. It’s hard to concentrate on anything I find arousing enough to get all the way there, and um...once I finish, I feel lonelier than ever.”

“That’s a shame.” Hannibal looked not amused, not judgemental, but genuinely sad, desiring to help.

That’s all in your head, and not the right one, either. Now, stop this line of thinking before you slip up and call him ‘Hannibal’ out loud.

“When was the last time you were properly kissed?” Hannibal pressed, and Will thought he was going to scream.

He pressed his lips together, trying to ignore the way Hannibal’s words just made him want to walk over to that desk and pin the doctor to it so that they could make out for hours until their lips were bruised and swollen.

“Uhhh. *Have* I been?” He laughed humorlessly and scratched the back of his neck, where it seemed a rash had suddenly broken out, but no, it was just another one of those pleasant tingles which the doctor routinely caused him without even touching him. “Sounds like a great big waste of someone’s time. I mean, whatever that was with Alana, it just proved I’m not cut out for that sort of thing.”

Hannibal was watching him with growing disdain for this attitude. “It seems very important to you that you continue believing yourself in some way inferior or unworthy.”

“That bothers you?” Will asked, confused and elated and desperate to either run or find out if this feeling was mutual.

“It does.” Hannibal’s voice was like the river water near Will’s house, the place he went for solace, cool liquid pouring and rushing over sharp rocks, a force of nature, reassuring in its vibrant relentlessness. “I can’t help you if you won’t allow yourself to feel worthy. The punishment you make yourself endure is not the pleasant kind, nor conducive to anything else but unwarranted depression.”

“So, there’s a *pleasant* kind of punishment?” Will raised his eyebrows.

“Of course there is, Will. But we are not getting off the subject, no matter how dearly you would like to, and however cleverly you attempt it.”

Will sighed. “Fine,” he said like a petulant child.

“I asked about kissing for good reason. There is something incredibly centering about the simple act of a proper kiss. Nothing to think about except the other person’s warm mouth pressed to your own and the slow exploration of gradually opening and tasting. You are a force of nature, a flower dense with dew and awakening with a fragrant, pleasured sigh to the sun and the fresh air, the beauty of the universe that lives inside you and surrounds you.”

A force of nature, Hannibal's words echoing Will's thoughts, giving him the mirror, the connection he longed for, effortlessly. As if they were already inside each other in every way that mattered. They felt...inevitable.

Will was sure he was going to faint; the tingling sensation had taken over his whole body; his hands and legs were trembling and he felt like he was possibly not about to black out, but rather about to come or cry, maybe both at the same time. If he touched his cock just ever so slightly, he thought he would shatter into a million pieces, undone by impossibly profound bliss. It was Hannibal's presence, the warmth in his danger, the beautiful comfort of his words, the sensuality of every nuance between them. He stared at the rug, wishing he could fall away from the rejection he was opening himself up for by disappearing into the complex, beautiful design of paisley that reminded him of Hannibal's tie.

I'm all tied up, wrapped up in his every word, and he hasn't laid a finger on me…

"In addition to the kiss," Hannibal continued thoughtfully, "Perhaps nothing else but the feel of their steady heartbeat against your palm, a reassuring presence. A reminder that you are alive, and not alone in the universe, not isolated in your longing for connection. What do you think?"

"I don't know what to think." Will put his face in his hands, rubbed it like it would come off and reveal someone new and acceptable, worthy.

Or maybe the skin would simply peel off into his hands, revealing underneath the ghastly interior of his worst nightmares, the monster within, the one who thought what the Chesapeake Ripper did was poetic, admirable, inspiring.

Hannibal waited for him to stop his dramatic antics and talk openly, and Will's heart squeezed in exhausted gratitude. "Sorry, it's just...I don't have anyone to try that out with, and it's hard for me to imagine someone wanting…"

"You," said Hannibal simply. "But what if I did?"

"Is this hypothetical?"

If Hannibal noticed how Will was disintegrating into helpless need right before his eyes, he at least had the decency to look slightly nervous himself.

"No."

"Oh." Will nodded quickly, flexing and unflexing his hands, "Oh, so that's uhmm...when did that start?"

"Always. It's unconventional," Hannibal pointed out unnecessarily, tracing the edge of a scalpel on his desk atop a thin stack of drawings.

"It's inappropriate." Will got up and walked a semicircle around the room, dragging his palm over the bookshelf. "That's why, uh, I haven't said anything about it on my end. That I've been thinking about it, too."

“I see. Perhaps it is almost overly convenient that I am not officially your therapist, Will.” Hannibal gave him a smile that was downright naughty.

“Jesus, I. I mean, I wouldn’t know what to do or where to start.”

“Yes, you would. You’re a remarkable boy with a stunningly adept imagination. You’ve just confessed that you have thought about the two of us together in a non-platonic context, and I’m certain there were images associated with that. But you’re too bashful to put your own desires forward, even knowing I would enjoy nothing more.”

“But I don’t know that,” Will fretted, finally arriving at the desk where he stood before Hannibal in trepidation. “Anytime I’ve liked someone in the past, they change their mind, once they kiss me, or listen to me talk long enough, get a load of my *quirks,* -- or else they take me to bed and get the only thing they wanted in the first place, then disappear. I’m not saying you’re like that, I know you’re not. I also realize I’m rambling, I sound like a teenager right now…”

“And a Southern teenager at that,” Hannibal smiled, enchanted. He made no move toward Will but held him in place effortlessly with his pleased expression. His approval. “I’ve been noticing how your old accent slips back into your speech when you refer to a potentially amorous interaction between us. Why do you think that is?”

“I feel like a boy with you,” Will got out on a gush of heated breath as his face turned beet red and he trembled harder. “Like you can protect me or hurt me, and I don’t care which, but I’d like it.”

“You’re a very good boy, Will,” Hannibal said thickly. “You’ll do as you're told for me, won’t you?”

“Y-yes, Hann--”

“Yes, sir,” Hannibal interrupted, and the authoritative way he said it sent shivers down Will’s spine.

“Yes, sir,” he repeated as if in a trance.

“Go and sit on the couch, Will.”

As Will obeyed, despite shaking legs and a riotous heartbeat, Hannibal took off his suit jacket and laid it neatly over the desk chair, then came to sit beside Will on the elegant couch -- it was pale blue and soft, looked like something Victorian. The walls were as red as the blood that painted the inside of his thoughts, and the scent in the air between them was spiked as much by his own desire as by the manly, spicy aroma of Hannibal’s cologne.

Gorgeous, he’s so fucking gorgeous. Will was momentarily transfixed by Hannibal’s serious expression and the happiness brewing behind it, as if the secondary emotion was afraid of itself and used the first as a cloaking technique. They had so much in common, but they were so different. He was hypnotized, almost, by the sight of the older man’s strong wrists, the veins in his hands, the easy strength and certainty of his being.

“It just occurred to me to wonder how I look,” Will said, hopelessly flustered. “I mean aside from nervous, perspiring, and completely out of my depth.”

“You’ve never been with a man,” Hannibal guessed, his voice so smooth and deep, again Will just wanted to disappear into that feeling and never come back out again into the hurt that characterized so much of his existence.

“No, no,” Will said, struggling to control his fidgeting. “Not something that ever crossed my mind before this. Um, before you.”

“That’s immensely flattering, and very exciting to me, Will.” Hannibal covered Will’s hand with his own and pressed it firmly to Will’s thigh. “Sit still, my dear. You asked me how you look.”

“Yeah,” said Will softly. He had stopped fidgeting although his heart was still racing and his cock was so hard it hurt not to be touched, not to find a way to rub or find a warm grip.

“Beautiful,” Hannibal said with an indulgent smile, tracing a fingertip over Will’s stubbled jaw until the younger man gulped. “You look beautiful. As you always do.”

“Sometimes people tell me I’m ‘handsome,’” Will blathered, “With a side order of ‘but unstable,’ ‘but so quiet and strange,’ et cetera.”

“You are also handsome, but the word seems insufficiently powerful to describe how much so. Tell me, my dear, would you like to try the experiment? Perhaps a proper kiss would help you to relax. If I can no longer ethically proceed as your therapist, at least I can still offer you comfort.”

Will was already blushing too hard to get any redder, or the compliments would have done it. “You don’t owe me anything,” he said, enthralled but feeling nearly feverish, or maybe the two were all wrapped up together. “You don’t have to try and make me feel at ease, or…”

“Neither of us owes the other anything, Will. What we owe to ourselves is honesty. I want to kiss you. I have wanted it since the moment our eyes met, or possibly even before that…”

“Come on, no you didn’t,” Will laughed, delightfully weighted to his spot on the couch by Hannibal’s insistent grip on his hand pressed tight to his thigh, marveling at how many nerve endings and pores seemed to immediately swoon with enjoyment at every small caress of the older man’s other hand on his face, roving down his neck to sweep across the front of his throat.

“Never underestimate the power of your lovely curls, nor your beguiling figure,” Hannibal chided fondly. “Your derriere, for example…”

“Oh, now you’re trying to make me blush,” Will accused. “I, um...you. I think you’re very attractive, too. Fuck, this is so stupid, it’s more than that, but I’m so…”

“Perfect. And thank you, Will, for being honest with me. Would you do me the honor of taking it one step further and answering the question?” He brushed his thumb over Will’s

bottom lip, deep in thought, about what Will could not quite fathom.

“Yes, I want you to kiss me.” Will swallowed. “I want it very badly.”

“But you’re such a good boy,” Hannibal praised, making Will even harder although it defied belief that this should be possible. “Have you ever wanted someone to dominate you before this?”

“No, sir.” Will licked his lips, mirroring Hannibal’s earlier action. Hannibal’s hand moved into his hair, gripping Will’s curls tightly at the back of his head. “But I want you to.”

“Good boys always say please,” Hannibal smiled, and while he commanded there was nonetheless a dreaminess in his eyes.

“Please kiss me, sir,” Will whispered, “Please.”

Fragmented dreams and visions cascaded through Will’s mind’s eye like the amber stained glass shade of Hannibal’s eyes right before they fluttered closed. He saw himself waking up on the road in the middle of a freezing cold night, felt the shiver to his soul. He saw Hannibal smiling at him in the kitchen of his fancy house, telling him he wouldn’t be bad company, wanting him to stay; he saw the stag stalking through the shadows of his lonely mind, leaving footprints of blood that felt like stains. He saw his father leaving him in the house alone at night to make his own dinner and put himself to bed when he was only nine, and he heard Jack Crawford’s voice in his head, telling him to get back to work, Alana’s voice saying *“it’s because you’re unstable,”* Beverly with a wry snark because she didn’t know him well enough to understand it would mortify him, saying, *“you unstable?”*

Hannibal, telling him, *the mirrors in your mind can reflect the best in you, not the worst in someone else.*

The echoes of all the other voices and influences and sources of pain and self-hate faded away. He heard Hannibal saying again, against his lips right before they brushed their mouths together, “*You’re beautiful.*”

A single tear slid down over Will’s fever-flushed cheek as Hannibal gripped his hair almost harshly but kissed his lips with perfect tenderness, so soft and sweet. This happened quite a few times, careful, sensitive presses of mouth to mouth, completely different from any kisses he had experienced before. Hannibal wasn’t trying to rush anything, like almost everyone Will had dated, and he certainly wasn’t in the process of deciding this should never happen again, which had been Alana’s reaction to him. Will didn’t care about any of that anymore, all of a sudden. This really was *a proper kiss,* soulful, slow and savoring.

Will moaned and parted his lips, prompting Hannibal to lick languidly into his mouth, stroking his tongue against Will’s own, tasting him more deeply as the moments slipped by like raindrops down a windowpane, iridescent with longing and disbelief this was really happening. Shining and alive. He didn’t know where to touch Hannibal, but he wanted to touch him. In his delirious haze, all he could remember was Hannibal saying, *Perhaps nothing else but the feel of their steady heartbeat against your palm, a reassuring presence.*

He slid his hand under Hannibal's tie to feel his heartbeat through his smooth shirt, only to find that the beat wasn't steady at all. His own had slowed a bit, as the kiss had actually anchored him and left him feeling as in touch with solace as he was with danger. But Hannibal's heart was like a sledgehammer; it surprised him.

"Your heart's beating so fast," he murmured between kisses. Their lips were plump and wet with each other, their eyes half-lidded, Hannibal's voice nearly a slur of incomprehensibly thickened accent when he replied.

"A habit it seems to have picked up where you are concerned." He let go of Will's hair, leaving a pang of deprivation with the release of that small pain in the tugging pressure. "I'm not accustomed to this sort of thing, if I'm honest. It's...as though you have something I need. And I don't usually need anything from anyone at all."

"Does it bother you, needing?" Will asked. "You thought you were just going to…"

"Yes." Hannibal ran gentler fingers through Will's mussed curls, then sat back and pulled his hands away altogether. "I thought I would give you what you need and take what I wanted. I failed to realize that my response to you could go so much deeper, when it already seemed nearly beyond my control."

"Did you think that by controlling me, you could control yourself until you felt better about it?"

"That's not the only reason I wanted to dominate you, Will."

"Past tense," Will frowned, feeling the familiar cold misery seeping back into his skin. "I get it. I know that I'm too much, I'm..."

A burden. An embarrassment. A regret.

"Wonderful," Hannibal insisted warmly. "Can't you see that's why this is becoming difficult for me? That it isn't your fault, that not everything that occurs must be your fault? I simply...need time to understand what is happening to me. Please do not read this as a rejection or a suggestion we won't continue...if you wish to continue, that is."

"I don't know," Will shrugged, his defenses coming back up. "How long do you need? No, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, that's awful of me. You take all the time you need, I understand. I didn't mean to overreact like that. We're not even dating, a half hour ago you were my therapist."

"Never officially," said Hannibal with a wan smile. "My irresistible Will, can you accept me as I am, a man unaccustomed to emotional intimacy but confronted by it all the same?"

"Are you tempted by it?"

"You know I am, you naughty boy."

"Thank you, that's all I wanted to know," Will said with a mysterious smile of his own. He felt like he was a cup overflowing with burning desire; he didn't know what to do with himself. "Sorry, I'll go, I just need a minute to sort of..compose myself?"

“Because you are hard. Why don’t you give yourself some relief, here and now, as a treat for your beautiful honesty, and quite frankly because you are so very beautiful in general that it would bring me complete delight to watch you.”

Normally, Will would have made a run for it, but the words *as a treat* made him feel bolder and more brazen than he would have imagined. He loved the idea of Hannibal watching, it thrilled him and made him even harder. And so he bit his lip and nodded. He wouldn’t have liked this with anyone else. It was special.

“Yes, sir.”

Hannibal went back to his desk, sat at the front of it with his hands tightly clamped down around the edge of the furniture, his eyes dark and heavy on Will’s every move.

Will unbuttoned his wrinkled green flannel shirt and slipped it off. He was so turned on, between the kissing and what Hannibal had said, and what it all did to his body, that he melted into the experience far more readily than he ever would have expected. Hannibal took in the sight of his firm biceps, flushed hard nipples and slender, vulnerable belly with a sharp intake of breath.

“Take off your pants,” he ordered, his voice much gruffer than Will had heard it before. Hannibal’s own smooth, dark trousers were obscenely tented, but he made no move to touch himself, just drank Will in with intoxicating obsession.

Will unbuttoned his pants, eased them down over his aching cock along with his briefs. Belatedly, blushing at the oversight, he toed off his shoes and leaned down to yank his socks off (it seemed weird not to) but he was naked now and hyperaware of the fact. He lay down on the light blue couch that brought out the same shade in his eyes, and then he closed them, slowly beginning to tease his own nipples, pinching them and gasping as his hips slowly rocked up and down. The cool air of the office was pleasant on his exposed sex and he heard Hannibal growl low in his throat.

“Please, Will, don’t tease me.”

Will smiled and wrapped his hand around his bulging cock, immediately crying out in relief and giving a single dry stroke. He licked his hand liberally, lapping his tongue as Hannibal murmured, “There’s a well-behaved boy. You know what feels good, so give it to yourself. You deserve it.”

There was a novel thought. Whenever Will got off alone, he always regretted it moments later, because the orgasm left in its wake a renewed sense of his own unlovable nature, his depraved inclinations towards violence and the guilt that came with it, accompanied by the disappointment of total solitude. The images that flooded him when he was turned on were so gruesome, twisting bones and ripping out organs with his bare hands, having a lover bite him so hard that he bled and then suck him into ripe bruises, fucking hard and into overstimulation until pleasure was pain and he screamed with it.

He was sure the bad feeling would come back this time, too, but until then he was going to enjoy this, being watched by Hannibal, wanted and up on a pedestal he could never be

worthy of. For now he could borrow the dream of love and companionship, he could pretend he *did* deserve this treat.

“Yes, sir...feels so good...amazing…” Will gathered precum from his weeping cock to blend with the spit in his hand until he got a glide going, and it was breathtaking. He moaned, stroking himself faster and playing with his nipples, his legs splayed shamelessly on the couch.

“Tell me exactly how it feels.”

Will heard a faint creaking of expensive cherrywood as Hannibal gripped the desk with painful intensity.

“Hot...aching...incredible…” He pumped himself harder, moaned louder until it seemed to echo from the walls. “Wish I had your mouth on mine again...on my body...that you were sucking me off...oh, *fuck,* God that’s good. Wish you were inside me--”

And he did, he really did, *so* much, even though this was all so new, and that would be newest of all, he could only imagine having every inch of Hannibal and the excessiveness of his sincere emotions poured all over him as the most exquisite fantasy, blocking out everything else.

“I wish I were, too.” Hannibal’s voice was soft and quick, “You’re ravishing, Will. You are complete perfection. I want you to come for me now.”

“Yes, yes,” Will whispered fervently, building the pleasure up faster with every expert stroke; he did know his own body and how to give himself joy, he did know bliss, and he could take it. He would make Hannibal proud. “Yes, sir-- *oh,* oh, God!”

“Lovely boy,” Hannibal praised as Will came all over his hand, hips shuddering as pleasure flooded his whole body, radiating like a glow from within. “There you go. That’s just what you deserve, isn’t it, to feel so good? To be wanted and admired, even worshipped?”

Will panted and lay there laughing and crying. The feeling of disgust with himself was nowhere to be found. “Yes,” he breathed, looking around to see Hannibal coming to him, flushed and still hard, even with a splotch of precum where his cock was pressed to his trousers, but making no move to give himself pleasure because this was all about Will’s beauty, Will’s realization.

Hannibal had brought tissues, and tenderly he cleaned Will, gave him some sips of water, then cupped his jaw and pressed a kiss to his sweaty brow. He disposed of the kleenex in the small adjoining bathroom and reappeared with a soft red blanket which he used to cover Will.

“There now,” he almost cooed, his breath warm against Will’s face as he sat on the couch, in the small space left by Will’s curled-up legs. Will looked at him in silent wonderment. “I’ll cancel the remainder of my appointments for this afternoon. A nap would be very nice now, wouldn’t it?”

“Yes, sir, it would.” Will smiled, “I feel relaxed.”

It didn't matter about work, or his obligations, or really anything but fading into an enveloping sleep with his body buzzing in the afterglow of pleasure while Hannibal watched over him.

"Perfect. I'm so very proud of you, Will. Sweet dreams."

"Mmm," Will muttered, falling into a powerfully dense slumber as soon as his eyes closed.

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Hannibal Lecter had accomplished the impossible: he had helped Will Graham to relax. Surely he should be in a state of egotistical glee right now which even for him would be remarkably intense. Yet here he was, so far from relaxed himself that it was almost as if he and the profiler had traded personalities.

He had no idea what to do with himself. First, he gathered Will's discarded clothing with a sharp wince of affection at the soft, overworn fabric and the smell of sweet fever mingled with cheap aftershave. He folded the clothes neatly and placed them on a side table, then went to his desk and sat there trying to remember how to breathe. His arousal gradually faded in its physical vehemence, although his mind could not seem to let go of the distinct and worrying suspicion that it resided in his previously vacant heart as well.

Hearing from Will that the attraction was mutual had meant far too much for him; for that sweet, innocently dangerous voice to call him "Sir," to kiss those angel lips and manhandle the boy (just a tiny hint of how much he wanted to)...he was still reeling from the immense thrill of it all. No matter what occurred now, he would never forget the sight of Will stroking himself to a shattering orgasm, the lines of his gorgeous physique and his stunning face contorted in pleasure.

Most of all, he could not seem to shake off the way it had felt when Will admitted he felt relaxed, that he understood he was worthy of affection, pleasure and comfort. It felt better than breaking Will down to insanity, and that was an unexpected problem.

He opened the bottom drawer of his desk and unlocked the hidden compartment, surveying the strobe light, drugs and various other implements of his plan to use psychic driving to dismantle Will's sanity and convince him he was a killer. Suddenly, they no longer held the same wicked appeal, although he knew how gorgeously Will would submit to his upper hand in this as well. He knew how Will would weaken and sink into the darkness of his own worst fears, and that this would allow him to extricate himself from the profiler's inevitable eventual suspicions of Hannibal's own guilt. The encephalitis would make it even easier to put the scheme into practice, so why, *why* was Hannibal starting to doubt the efficacy of this plan in bringing about anything other than his own heartbreak?

This was supposed to be a bit of light fun, toying with Will Graham's remarkable mind, opening it to darkness, breaking Will until the beautiful profiler grew strong enough to take what he wanted in life. It was supposed to be good for Will, the only way Hannibal knew how to make the young man stop fighting his own nature and begin truly living.

Now the only one who seemed to be breaking or drowning was Hannibal. He should cross the room right now and smother Will out of mercy to them both, but instead he found himself lifting pencil to paper. He spent the rest of the afternoon sinking into his own shock of tender emotion and sketching the charming boy while he slumbered. Even this did not calm him; it was only that he could not seem to help himself.

***

“Hello, Will,” said Hannibal gently when Will’s eyes fluttered open again several hours later.

“What...what time is it?” Will asked, bleary-eyed and bewildered. He sat up, only to realize he was still very much naked, and then he blushed to his roots.

Hannibal, who sat beside him, smiled and answered, “six o’clock.”

“Shit, what was I thinking? I had so much I needed to get done today.” Will found his glasses on the end table and slid them back on, scanning the room for his clothes.

Hannibal crossed the room to retrieve the denim and flannel, then set them down beside Will. “May I drive you home?”

“May you...you’ve done so much for me already today, and I’ve done absolutely nothing for--” Will frowned but Hannibal put a hand over his pretty mouth.

“Shhh, my dear. You’ve done more for me than you know. I seem to have developed a certain addiction to taking care of you. Let me continue?”

“What did you have in mind?” Will asked, pulling his t-shirt over his head and setting his glasses slightly askew before righting them. He buttoned up his flannel, then threw on his underwear and jeans, changing under the blanket because he was feeling self-conscious again.

“I’ll cook dinner and make love to you,” Hannibal proposed, so bluntly that Will’s jaw dropped. “If you like, the entire proposal being optional of course.”

“I thought you...needed time to decide what to do. About the emotional intimacy and everything.”

“I should take time,” Hannibal admitted, resplendent in his suave attire, that damn snug waistcoat and those well-fitting pants sending Will’s thoughts back into sinful territory. More compelling still was Hannibal’s expression, momentarily almost distraught. “However, I cannot seem to resist following this temptation with you. Do you understand?”

Will took his hand, caressed over the lines of veins, felt the heat of the older man’s answering grip, slightly damp with his own nervous sweat. He couldn’t believe *he* could do this to Hannibal Lecter -- rumpled, uneasy, awkward Will Graham? How could it be -- but it made him feel so amazing.

“Yes, I understand completely. Take me home.”

***

They laughed and chatted quietly in the car as Will switched through various satellite radio stations trying to find music other than classical or opera that Hannibal could tolerate. When they pulled into the drive of Will's rustic little house, it didn't seem to be in the middle of nowhere anymore; the sense of isolation was gone, however temporarily. He was here, with the man who longed to be his lover. They were on an impromptu and desperately intimate date and the mood was fragile but held him close to his own happiness.

"So you remember Winston, Buster, Zoe…" Will chuckled as the dogs ran up to them when they went inside the house.

The rest of the pack scampered forward to have their chance to sniff out the evening guest, and Hannibal patiently petted each of them in turn, glancing over at Will's blushing, joyful countenance. It meant a lot to Will to share this part of his life with someone who cared, and Hannibal loved giving that to him.

Will brought the dogs outside for a little while and Hannibal got to cooking. A brief stop at the finest market on the route between Baltimore and Wolf Trap had ensured he had some reasonably adequate ingredients to prepare them a passable dinner. It wasn't anything close to the amount of decadence he would infuse to a meal for Will at his own house, with all of his usual implements, but he knew he was far too anxious to do better than adequate tonight, at any rate. His mind was an unrecognizable tangle, and he had fallen into being downright impetuous.

When Will came back in the house, he gave a few pointed whistles that prompted the dogs to obediently go to their various pillows on the floor by the space heater. Hannibal looked up from his work in rubbing spices over a whole raw chicken. And he tried to reassure himself that the heat cascading over his skin was merely due to the preheated oven behind him, having nothing to do with Will's gorgeous features and the heartfelt smile which the profiler cast him.

But Will's pale cheeks were pink with cold, the tip of his nose, too. The removal of his blue-grey wool hat caused his curls to look delightfully ruffled. When he took off his jacket, his flannel shirt rose slightly to show off a thin swath of hard stomach, and Hannibal sucked in a quick breath. He had already seen Will stark naked and masturbating furiously, yet every small detail of the man still had him transfixed as if even possessing all of Will could never be enough. Killing him wouldn't be enough; eating him would be nothing more than a temporary placebo for this devastating desire. A softer means of influence roiled through him like a fire to consume his harsh disposition, his uncaring nature. Oh, how he cared.

Will poured them each a whiskey and approached the kitchen counter where Hannibal worked. The profiler paused, watching Hannibal's strong hands methodically arranging the raw meat, and something clicked behind his haunted gaze like magic. He stood there frozen in time with two glasses of whiskey in his hands and the untarnished truth spilling from his tongue.

"You're the Ripper."

This was absolutely absurd. Hannibal was falling in love whilst simultaneously correctly accused of his crimes and his hands were still all over the raw chicken, which meant that he absolutely must wash them before viciously wringing the life from Will. He might be going crazy, but there was no need to be unsanitary.

So he washed his hands, then slid the chicken into the oven because he didn't know what else to do, but there was surely no point letting a wonderful meal go to waste. Perhaps if Will wasn't intent on calling the FBI right away, they could enjoy a last dinner together prior to a deadly grapple.

Will set the glasses down on the counter at last and stood there in his grey socks and his jeans with his adorable face curiously intent, not the reaction of rage and betrayal Hannibal had expected. This revelation upended Will's perception of him as his paddle, but the young man did not reflect resentment. On the contrary, he was at present quite unreadable, in a way that made Hannibal want to shake him and demand answers.

"I can't believe I didn't see it before," Will breathed at last, still just standing there as Hannibal looked from the sliced carrots and potatoes on the cutting board to the profiler's face, now set in something like shocked relief. The knife was right there beside the cutting board, *why wasn't Hannibal grabbing it?*

"Forgive me, Will, the suddenness of your statement has left me bereft." His mouth was dry; he took a sip of whiskey, grateful for the rough burn of it slightly taking the edge off his panic.

"Do you know how many nights I've dreamed about you?" Will asked, his eyes dreaming again now. He took a step closer and looked up at Hannibal in wonderment. "Every night, since I saw your first tableaus. You've lived in my thoughts, I could never shake you off. I stare at the slides when I'm preparing my lectures, and I know I look too long, instilling the imagery onto my mind's eye until it poisons me and I can't let go. I see myself in you, and it isn't just my empathy, it's a plain point of fact. You're everything in me I fear and desire to be."

"You aren't going to call Jack Crawford, turn me in, yell at me perhaps for lying all of this time?" Hannibal blinked back tears of confusion.

"You are the one," Will smiled beatifically. He cupped Hannibal's face, his long, pretty fingers tracing sculpted cheekbones as the older man gulped. "The one I've been looking for all along. I want you more than ever. I don't think I can wait another minute."

Hannibal stared at him, looking for the catch, the lie, the trick. There was nothing but emotional nakedness in Will's face and the way he held Hannibal as if to still his worried thoughts before they spiraled.

"I see myself in you, we are somehow...each other. I can't be without you anymore, Will." Hannibal pulled him into a tight hug and Will relaxed immediately to his powerful body and vice grip, sighing in contentment.

“Let me be your good boy, sir,” Will begged, pressing heated kisses through Hannibal’s shirt, all over his chest and his hammering heartbeat.

“My darling,” Hannibal sighed, and then they were kissing, hard, deep and needy, stumbling for the bed and falling onto it so recklessly that the weak mattress made a plaintive squeaking sound.

“Mmm, Hannibal,” Will murmured between kisses as they peeled each other’s clothes off and ground together with delectable ferocity.

Their hard cocks slid together, wet and aching, and Hannibal pinned Will beneath him to grind harder while he laid siege to the pale column of his neck with wet kisses, then biting. Every bite, from gentle and testing to fierce and hurtful, made Will moan louder, so Hannibal let go of his own restraint, sucking hard around a deep bite until Will’s pained, ecstatic noises made it clear to Hannibal that he had never wanted anything in this world so much as he wanted to be buried deep inside this gorgeous boy. His very good boy, who saw him fully, understood and accepted him with reciprocated admiration and need.

“My Will,” he muttered hotly, and when he paused to hold Will’s trembling hands down firmly and simply drink in the sight of his lover, Will was staring at him all over, taking in the unaccustomed manliness of his physique, the difference of this experience to any he had known in every way. Hannibal’s hard muscle, the crisply soft hair on his chest and trailing his stomach on the way down to his thick, uncut and pulsing cock where precum pearled the tip, the greater mass of weight pressing Will down and capturing him, just short of smothering.

“Are you going to fuck me, sir?” Will asked, teasing but doing so in exactly the way Hannibal liked, so that he smiled, letting go of the younger man’s wrists where he had left nail marks and nearly cut off circulation.

“Will, I’m going to fill you and take you until you can hardly breathe and you certainly cannot process a thought aside from begging for more,” Hannibal informed him huskily. He slinked down the bed and nosed against Will’s cock before licking up and down the bulging length of his sweet boy. Will shivered and grabbed the back of his head, fingers tangling in silky, silvery hair.

“Please, please, it’s all I want,” Will gasped, getting harder as precum teased Hannibal’s palate with the most intimate taste of his beautiful, precious lover. “Need you to show me.”

Hannibal looked up at him, the way he was staring back with complete vulnerability and devotion, blue eyes blazing, swollen lips parted on more sighs and gasps of anticipation. He would take care of Will now, bring him endless pleasure, tend to his fever, possess him wholly. All of it in good time. He stroked Will’s thigh where his legs were spread so openly, even though he was quivering because he had no real concept of how this would be or feel.

“How I want you, Will,” he sighed, sinking his mouth down over Will’s urgent erection as the younger man gripped his hair and grabbed the pillow with his other hand, almost tearing through the fabric of the pillowcase.

“God, sir, please -- that’s so fucking good -- I need --”

I know, my dear. Hannibal never let up, sucking and savoring every inch, relishing the taste and feel of Will's hard, hot flesh plunging over his tongue. He used every single skill he had ever perfected, lapping and swirling his tongue and deep throating until Will came on a harsh cry, cum pouring beautifully into Hannibal's worshipful mouth.

Will was still staring, trying to clutch at his lover with shaking hands to bring him close enough to kiss. Hannibal looked up at him with a saucy heat in his eyes, allowing some of the cum to drip from his lips just so he could slowly lick it back into his mouth.

"Jesus Christ," Will shivered again, "That's so...I can't believe this -- please, give me more, let me give *you*..."

"Give me yourself," Hannibal commanded, hovering over him eye to eye, his own thick hardness pressing intently to Will's thigh, wetted with copious fever sweat from Will and the precum still liberally dripping from his aching member. "That's all I need. Tell me that you belong to me. There is no turning back."

Will nodded, "Yes, sir. I'm yours, and I need you inside me."

Hannibal changed position to caress Will's face with his cock. He slicked his hard-on up and down Will's cheek, then slapped him lightly with it as Will opened his mouth wide, begging, almost drooling.

"Here you are, sweet boy," Hannibal sighed, so aroused that it pained him. He slid his cock between those pretty lips and watched as Will slowly got used to the new sensation of another man in his mouth, moving slowly back and forth.

"Tighten your lips," Hannibal added in a satiny tone. He planted his palms more firmly to the bed and fucked harder into the slick heat of Will's lovely mouth, so innocent and naughty all at once, and entirely his to do just what he liked with. "Taste and enjoy all you like, without shame or restraint."

Will moaned and did as he was told, and Hannibal taught him how to take more inches, so deep and merciless his eyes watered and he gagged, and he grew hard again himself in response.

"What a good boy," Hannibal praised, easing himself from Will's lips lest he explode into bliss so soon. It was so hard not to come that he grunted in discomfort, but shivered in happiness.

"Good boys earn treats," he continued, giving Will several of his fingers to suck on. "Have you any lubricant on hand, my dear?"

"It's in the drawer there," Will said when Hannibal withdrew his fingers to receive the answer. Hannibal smiled in approval, wondering if Will had purchased the lube only for his own occasional masturbation or also out of the fantasy that this might one day occur.

"I was thinking about you when I bought it," Will admitted, blushing quite red.

“Will, I do not think this bedframe will survive what I’m going to do to you.” Hannibal trembled with lustful need, slicking up his fingers and cock, then tracing Will’s entrance as they both moaned.

Will clung to him in surprise and amazement at the way it felt for Hannibal to penetrate him with big, strong fingers, carefully opening him, so loving and attentive, not allowing for the slight burn of intrusion to ever grow stronger than the pleasure.

“You’re stunning, inside and out,” he purred, thrusting in with two fingers while Will panted, unused to the pressure on his prostate and the hot tendrils of pleasure that shot through his body in response.

“Oh, God, Hannibal, I want all of you,” Will begged, almost pouting.

“What does a good boy say?”

“Please, please, please…”

Hannibal smirked and moved down the bed again, lifting Will’s thighs and licking obsessively at his gorgeous hole, surprising Will again.

“Oh, Jesus, that feels good,” Will nearly wept, biting his own hand and pawing nervously through Hannibal’s hair. “I never knew…”

“Let me show you,” Hannibal smiled, licking his lips, rising back up to line his cock to Will’s entrance.

Tenderly, he stroked Will’s face as he slowly entered him, letting a few moments pass for Will to adjust to his rigid, slick girth filling him up even though the need to fuck Will hard was almost more than he could hold back.

“*Will,*” he whispered, shocking himself with the force of his own emotions. He rocked his hips to delve deeper into that velvety, tight, warm heaven as Will’s fingers slid down the sweat of his back but gripped him with reassuring pressure. Again, although Will was shaking, he kept his legs up around Hannibal’s hips and sighed with pleasure.

“Will, I…” Hannibal pressed in to the hilt and their eyes locked, both tear-stained and overcome with feeling. “I love you,” he said, not because of the unbelievable amount of pleasure washing over his body and making him desperate to thrust into Will again and again, but because the startling intimacy of their joining meant everything to him, and he had to express it in words.

“Show me,” Will whispered, his eyes nearly rolling up with bliss as Hannibal began to fuck him in earnest, keeping the strokes of his thick cock long and deep, “Show me, please.”

Hannibal moaned and gave into his need, pounding Will relentlessly as the boy only held him more tightly and trembled harder, crying out for more. “Will, I can’t...I won’t last,” he gasped in frustration, “You’re so good, you feel like heaven, you’re everything I want…”

Will grabbed his face and kissed him again and again, murmured, “I want you to give into me, into love. I love you. Fuck me until you come, fill me up with your everything, Hannibal, please.”

The world seemed to contain nothing more than their two pounding hearts and their bodies moving in perfect harmony, chemistry that had sparkled between them from their first meeting now finding its ultimate fruition. With all the sweet, deliberate pressure to his prostate, it was no wonder Will orgasmed again, whimpering in awe. Hannibal bit Will’s shoulder hard as he came with a wet burst of cum deep inside him, gripping Will’s hip with his other hand so fiercely that there would be fingerprints red on his skin for days. He lay there struggling not to fully collapse into Will for several staggering moments of world-searing afterglow.

“It’s okay,” Will smiled, turning them gently so that he could nestle against Hannibal’s chest. Hannibal wrapped weak arms around Will, astonished by the feelings of love and acceptance he never expected, had not even allowed himself to fantasize about. “You’re all mine, aren’t you?”

“Yes, my dear,” Hannibal answered, his voice throaty as he held Will close and took comfort in their embrace. “Yes.”

They lay there for a while longer, not especially concerned with the passage of time, just nuzzling each other’s skin, smelling each other and sharing lazy kisses. Then the oven timer beeped and they both chuckled.

“We can still have dinner,” Will grinned, unabashed in his nakedness by now. When he sat up, the bed finally gave out and smacked to the floor.

Hannibal grabbed Will before gravity sent him flying from the bed, and they both laughed again, more loudly. “Fuck, we really did break the bed,” Will said proudly, although he was still blushing. No one blushed so prettily, Hannibal reflected with his heart warm and overflowing.

“As far as I am concerned, you may pack your bags and your dogs and move in with me tomorrow,” Hannibal announced, “That is if you like. It seems a more sensible solution than purchasing a new bedframe for this house.”

Will smacked him with a pillow. “You’re incorrigible. Would you really move in with me that fast?”

“Why hold back in cohabitating, now that we have done nearly everything else far too quickly, to our mutual happiness?” Hannibal shrugged. “Only do not leave me in suspense as to your thoughts on the matter." He took the same pillow Will had teased him with and playfully bopped Will’s head.

“Mmm, I said I belong to you, I love you, so the answer is yes, and thank you,” Will smiled, guileless and open. They both held onto the pillow as they kissed again, fingers automatically rubbing over each other's hands.

“You don’t have to thank me, my darling.” The humor faded from Hannibal’s face as he drew Will near and caressed his cheek. “It’s I who owe you the greatest debt of gratitude. I know we have much to discuss...secrets which I have kept from you…”

“I know,” Will nodded, rubbing his belly, “But I’m hungry.”

Hannibal melted into another laugh, the sweet sound still a surprise to his own ears. “The vegetables never went into the oven. We only have the chicken.”

“We can make sandwiches,” Will suggested. He went to the bathroom and cleaned up, bringing back a warm, wet cloth to do the same for Hannibal. Then he got a couple of faded plaid robes from the hook on the bathroom door, one of which he tossed to Hannibal while shrugging the other onto himself. “Luckily for you, the only things people seem to give me for Christmas are plaid pajamas, bad aftershave, and hats with fishing slogans.”

“Just you wait until this Christmas.” Hannibal tied the robe, which was a bit small on him but sufficed, and padded barefoot to the kitchen. He retrieved the oven mitts and took the chicken out of the oven, sending delicious fragrances into the air as Will leaned on the counter and batted his eyelashes, enjoying the sight of his lover in the kitchen, showing off his skills.

“Feeling distracted, Will?” Hannibal inquired with his eyes twinkling while he cut up the meat and began making the sandwiches, layering on the simple accompaniments he was able to include, such as mayonnaise, lettuce and tomato.

“I really am,” Will admitted, “But I’ll pour us some water and get the napkins.”

They ate in quiet contentment at Will’s little table, with Hannibal’s foot lazily caressing his own. The gazes between them were constant, heavier than what most people would find comfortable or even bearable; Will was deliriously drowning.

“Does this all mean you are no longer frightened of your darker instincts, my dear?” Hannibal asked, and Will’s lips curved, the expression chilling in its shameless intensity, containing an honesty he used to hide at all costs, most of all from himself.

“Oh, Hannibal,” he smiled, and anyone else looking at him would have been terrified. “I’m not afraid of anything anymore.”

End Notes

Title from the Rihanna song, of course 💕

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